

CONFIDENTIAL**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY****OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES**

25 June 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE BOARD**FROM:** R. W. Komer**SUBJECT:** Summary of Study on The Warning of Target Populations in Air War.

25X1

The following summary (R-167, 1 Nov 1949) might be of interest in connection with NIE-39. I will circulate any further material of interest as it comes to hand.

1. It is feasible to combine a warning program with a bombing offensive in such a way as to direct various actions of target populations.

- (a) Bombing alone in the ^{crisis} ~~absence~~ of psychological effects in addition to physical destruction. Some of these effects are desirable, some of them are undesirable in the light of military and national policy objectives.
- (b) Warnings are a potentially powerful means for increasing the desirable psychological effects of bombing and for directing the behavior of target populations into paths advantageous to the attacking force.
- (c) In World War II the opportunities for warning operations were not fully exploited, nor was there full exploitation of the potentialities of such warning operations as were undertaken. Lack of systematic knowledge of requirements for successful warnings and of their military worth may account for the fact that use and efficiency of warnings were unduly limited in the past.

2. Given certain military conditions and favorable operating conditions, it may be possible to achieve the dispersal of populations from target areas by forewarning of bombings.

- (a) Even in the absence of warnings, some evacuation of populations will occur: as a result of continued bombing of

25X1

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

target areas, and as the fears of bombing or fears of being overrun by ground forces mount.

- (b) Warnings can be used to reinforce the fears of the target populations and to encourage tendencies to flee, if the instructions given in the warning messages point out feasible actions that the population can take, and if the instructions are sufficiently concrete as to what to do and how to disperse.

3. Warnings of strategic bombing strikes can help achieve other military and national objectives. Together with dispersal, these other effects of warning may be said to constitute the military and political worth of warning.

- (a) Warnings are a particularly effective way of convincing target populations of the attacker's military superiority. When the bombings are carried out after advance warnings have been given, the target population's hopes of victory are convincingly challenged, and defeatist attitudes are increased.
- (b) Warnings can aggravate the resentment of a target population against its political leaders, discredit their propaganda, and help undermine the enemy government's authority in other ways.
- (c) Warnings, unlike other psychological warfare methods, can help reduce the cause of that resentment which is directed against the attacking air force. The warnings provide an opportunity for the target population to escape the worst consequences of bombing.
- (d) Warnings and their fulfillment can establish credibility for other U. S. messages to the enemy population. An entering wedge is provided for other political and military attempts to weaken the will to resist and to encourage activities disapproved by the enemy government.

4. Delivering warnings to the Soviet Union in case of war presents technical problems which are difficult but not impossible to solve.

- (a) The Soviet Union can jam radio messages, can attempt to intercept leaflet carriers, and take other countermeasures against incoming communications.
- (b) Present methods for transmitting and delivering warnings can be improved.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- (c) Research and development of new techniques may overcome present Soviet countermeasure capabilities.
 - (d) Messages may be put through to target populations by full coordination of multiple means for communicating warnings, and by fully exploiting both the technical and person-to-person channels through which messages travel.
5. The major effects of warnings can only be obtained if the messages are sufficiently fulfilled by bombings. The credibility of warnings is increased as the principle of fulfillment is followed.
6. Warnings involve certain military risks, as is true of most military operations.
- (a) In World War II warnings were largely given only after air supremacy had been obtained; air supremacy reduces or eliminates the risks of warning.
 - (b) If warnings are not carefully planned and delivered, the attacking force may lose the advantage of surprise and suffer higher losses than it otherwise would.
7. It is believed possible to develop warning programs which can reduce risks in conditions of contested control of the air; further research and development on the minimization of risk are indicated.
8. Different warning patterns can be used to achieve the desired effects at a minimum risk.
- (a) Warnings do not have to give the exact details of an intended attack.
 - (b) In particular, the exact time of attack does not have to be announced.
 - (c) Not every target warned "must" be attacked.
 - (d) Not every target to be bombed need be warned in order to produce the desired effects on those targets which are warned.
 - (e) Warnings do not necessarily have to be given so long in advance as to give the enemy time to regroup his defenses.
 - (f) The list of warned targets can contain locations so widely scattered that concentration of enemy fighter defenses would not be feasible.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

9. Certain general principles should govern the content and operations of warning programs in order to induce the target populations to act in the desired ways.

- (a) Principle of specificity: to be as specific concerning the time and place of later attack as is compatible with considerations of risk.
- (b) Principle of concreteness: describe this desired action as concretely and as specifically as possible.
- (c) Principle of feasibility: state only those demands which the target population can carry out.

10. The plans for warning operations and the effects which can be achieved are influenced by certain military and political conditions.

- (a) Degree of air superiority of the warning power.
- (b) Military superiority of the warning power in other respects.
- (c) The strength of the enemy's civil defenses.
- (d) Extent of evacuation carried out prior to the delivery of warning.
- (e) The effectiveness of police controls over the target population.
- (f) The allegiance of the target population to its rulers, their war policy, and the depth of nationalistic feeling.

11. The fullest utilization of warnings in time of war calls for close integration of the warning policy with national policy in general as well as with military strategy in particular.

- (a) The policy of warning enemy populations must be consistent with the peace aims of the warning power.
- (b) Warnings to the enemy populations must be supported, or at least tolerated, by domestic public opinion of the warning power.
- (c) Appropriate information and psychological warfare policy and operations during cold war periods can prepare the ground for proper utilization of warnings in case of war, since the enemy response to warning depends, among other things, on the political attitudes of the target population.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- (d) In this connection, special attention should be paid to the possibility of reaching Soviet soldiers, particularly in Germany and Austria, with appropriate information, since this information is likely to reach the Soviet Union through letters and through personal contacts by soldiers on furlough or transfer to their homeland.

R. W. KOTER

- 5 -

CONFIDENTIAL